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SUBJECT: UNAMA HIGHLIGHTS NEED FOR FAIRNESS AND CREDIBILITY
IN CAMPAIGNS

REF: A. KABUL 1299

B. KABUL 922

¶11. On June 15, UNAMA SRSG Kai Eide issued a statement in anticipation of the June 16 opening of the campaign period for the August presidential and provincial council elections.

Eide called on candidates to campaign with dignity and fairness, noting the responsibility of all candidates to ensure the upcoming electoral cycle strengthens the Afghan peoples' confidence in the democratic process. Eide's statement builds on existing lines of effort to ensure the candidates are committed to ensuring a credible, secure and inclusive electoral process. The Afghan press has not yet widely publicized Eide's comments.

DISCOURSE ON ISSUES AND NON-INTERFERENCE

¶12. Eide urged candidates to focus on issues, suggesting that each candidate should present a vision for the future of Afghanistan. He noted that a public debate focusing on key political challenges and proposals on how to move forward would allow the Afghan people to choose between policies instead of individuals. He also stressed that "intimidation, inflammatory language and violence of any sort have no place in this election campaign." Eide cited the significance of supporting the May presidential decree on non-interference by government institutions and officials (ref A), asserting that all candidates must have the right to campaign without interference to ensure a credible election process with an acceptable result. Eide concluded by noting that while Afghan authorities will administer the elections, the international community is supportive of a fair and credible election process.

GUIDELINES FOR CANDIDATES

¶13. Eide's statement follows the SRSG's recent publication of Essential Guidelines Applicable to Conducting the Electoral Process. The guidelines, which Eide has raised with President Karzai as well as opposition candidates Dr. Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani, lay out a recommended course for candidates, their officials, agents, party members and supporters. Focusing on positive actions, the guidelines highlight the need during the campaign period for candidates to act with responsibility, respect the rights and freedoms of other candidates to campaign without fear, respect the rights of voters to take part in political activities and cast votes freely, to respect freedom of the press, abide by the Presidential Decree on Non-Government Interference, contribute to a peaceful atmosphere and prevent intimidation or violence. The guidelines restate the requirements of compliance with the candidate finance regulations (ref B) and avoiding coercion, or intimidation.

AND CODES OF CONDUCT

¶14. The Independent Election Commission (IEC) also has a code of conduct for candidates and political parties. All candidates were required to sign the code of conduct during

the registration process. The IEC's code mirrors UNAMA's guidelines, focusing on ensuring ethical and legal standards to regulate activities during the electoral process. The 19 rights and duties, which range from respecting the principals of Islam and the provisions of the constitution to refraining from making false complaints and the secrecy of the vote, are an important step toward a credible election. Adding weight to the code, the IEC and the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) will consider violations of the code as electoral offenses, subject to ECC sanctions against the candidate in breach. Depending on the significance of the violation, the ECC's authority allows for the possibility of disqualification from the current election.

EIKENBERRY